

'Rightist' Role Seen in Soviet Upheaval

By Victor Zorza

The Manchester Guardian

LONDON, Oct. 15—Nikita

Khrushchev's removal from the leadership, apparently prepared in his absence on holiday in the Crimea, and the failure to prepare the Soviet public for the announcement suggest a forced retirement.

This conclusion would remain valid even if the most fulsome tributes were to be paid to Khrushchev by the other Soviet leaders, and they have not yet appeared. But they may well wish to avoid stirring up in the country a controversy between the pro-Khrushchev and anti-Khrushchev wings of public opinion, for this might be difficult to control at a time when the Soviet people have been showing a growing desire to participate in the making of political decisions.

Unconfirmed reports from Moscow said that the notion for Mr. Khrushchev's retirement was proposed by Mikhail Suslov at a meeting of party leaders. This would point to an initiative by the conservative wing of the party, of which Suslov has long been a spokesman. The new Premier Alexei Kosygin, is a "Technocrat" rather than a politician, and his appointment, if confirmed, is likely to be a temporary one. Party leader Leonid Brezhnev, on the other hand, has been groomed for the succession since he took over last year the post of second party secretary from Frol Koslov, who is thought to have challenged Khrushchev

News Analysis

policies after the Cuban fiasco.

Brezhnev's past associations with the Soviet military indicate that he would be acceptable to the conservative wing of the leadership, which is itself believed to be associated with the military. After the death of Stalin Brezhnev acted as the party's political officer for the Soviet navy.

Such differences between the members of the leadership which it has been possible to perceive between the lines of their speeches seemed to have been mainly concerned with the allocation of resources between the civilian and military.

Khrushchev has based the defense of the Soviet Union on a limited number of ICM in the belief that these would provide a reliable deterrent, and has used the money saved in this way for economic development and especially for the provision of larger amounts of consumer goods.

The argument of those who opposed this policy appears to have run something like this. Russia's failure to build up anything like the American arsenal of Minuteman and Polaris missiles—the proportion is believed to be about one Soviet to every four American ICBMs—could be viewed as a threat to peace, insofar as in certain circumstances it might provide a temptation for an attack on the Soviet Union.

Khrushchev's repeated cuts in the Soviet conventional forces would again be viewed as a gamble.

If an international crisis were to lead to an armed confrontation, or even to small-scale hostilities, Russia might have to give way at an early stage or use the ultimate weapons—thus provoking a nuclear exchange.

In one way, therefore, the arguments against Khrushchev could be viewed as being designed to secure a more stable peace, in the sense that balance of military power between east and

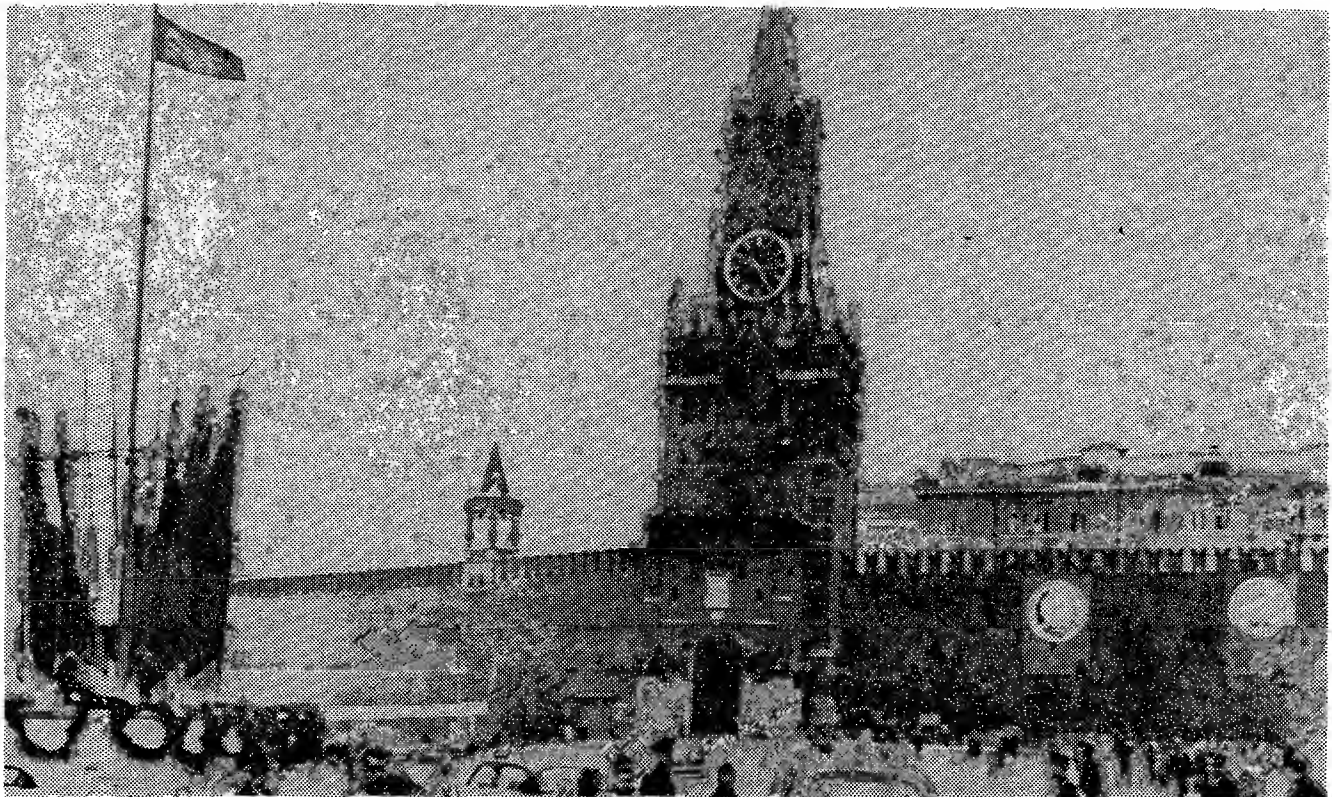
and west would provide greater security for both sides against the outbreak of war than an imbalance, which might invite risky adventures.

Certainly after Khrushchev's Cuban adventure there were signs that the conservative influence in the Soviet leadership was on the increase.

Circumstances were such as to suggest that Khrushchev had provoked the United States into threatening to use its full military might if Russia failed to withdraw the missiles from Cuba, and that Khrushchev had to climb down because of America's obvious military superiority.

Premature discovery of the missiles compelled Khrushchev to withdraw, but his apparent readiness to gamble with the peace of the world suggested that his advocacy of peaceful co-existence could take forms more likely to lead to war than the advocacy by other members of the Soviet leadership of greater spending on defense.

After the Cuban crisis there were signs that the conservative policy was being pressed on an unwilling Khrushchev in economic and cultural matters. This became particularly clear when an attack on new trends in literature and the arts developed along the whole cultural front towards the end of 1962, although only a few months before Khrushchev had himself been instrumental in starting yet another thaw by sanctioning the publication of the Stalin prison



United Press International

Red Square in Moscow was decorated yesterday for the heroes' welcome to be accorded to the three Soviet cosmonauts who rode in the first passenger spacecraft earlier

this week and the absence of pictures of Nikita Khrushchev caused Western observers to start speculating about a possible Soviet shakeup.

tion of Solzhonitayn's story camps.

Another sign of conservative influence was the appointment in March 1963 of a defense industry expert to head a new Supreme Council of the National Economy, shortly after Khrushchev assured the country in a public speech that he would never neglect the country's defenses for the sake of consumer goods.

A few months previously he had been arguing that the country's defenses were now sufficiently assured to enable it to concentrate on consumer goods production.

The conservative trend in the economy and the neo-Stalinists' attack on "liberals" in the fields of literature and culture continued until April, when Koslov disappeared from the scene, owing, it was officially announced, to illness.

Almost immediately there was a change. The cultural attack was called off, and the supreme council of the national economy hardly gave any subsequent sign of life. Khrushchev, in other

words, was back in the saddle.

But lately the controversy over the allocation of resources has flared up with new strength, presumably because Khrushchev had been pressing his advantage too hard.

At the beginning of this month the Soviet press published a communique on a joint session of the highest party to discuss the new long term economic plan. Khrushchev reverted to the argument that "now that the defence of the country is on the necessary level," the emphasis previously placed on heavy industry could be shifted to the consumer goods industries.

The new economic plan was to be drawn up on this basis. This means that decisions were about to be taken which would commit Soviet economic resources, perhaps irreversibly—if Khrushchev were to remain in power—to the fulfilment of his policies. This would have provided the motive for the opposition to remove Khrushchev now.